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SELF CONFRONTATION VERSUS
THE COSBY SHOW'S EFFECT ON
YOUNG AND OLD ADOLESCENT'S VALUE SYSTEMS

BY

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B.F.A., University of Florida, 1977

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree in Communication
in the Graduate Studies Program
of the College of Arts and Sciences
University of Central Florida
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DEDICATION

This degree is dedicated to my father, Robert I. Wollenberg. This is the best way I know to say thank you for all you've taught me. Happy 60th Dad.

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First, my thoughts and thanks go to Dr. Fred Fedler who was always there with an understanding interest and invaluable advice.

Sincere appreciation to all the faculty members whom I encountered along the way; your time, insight, and dedication are priceless. Most especially, Dr. Bert Pryor. He has the unique talent of being able to make the complex, simple - all with a sense of patience and humor. Thanks for your time and enthusiasm.

Thanks to the friends who understood and believed in me the past few years, your support was tremendous.

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To my Mom and Dad, and all my brothers, thank you for the love, support, and strength all of you have given me. I hope I've made you proud.

Lastly, my most heartfelt thanks and love go to my husband Warren, my greatest fan. All the hours you took to listen, to stay quiet while I studied, to pull me up and push me through the door to this degree are something I will never forget, or can repay. I love you.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 1900s the concept of attitude has occupied a dominant place in theoretical and empirical research. During the 1960s, Milton Rokeach suggested that perhaps the value concept should occupy the more prominent position due to several considerations. He stated that by bypassing the problem of values and their relation to attitudes, researchers settled for studies he calls problems of persuasion to the neglect of what he calls problems of education and re-education. Rokeach says researchers emphasized the persuasive effects of group pressure, prestige, order of communication, role playing, and forced compliance on attitudes, but they neglected the more difficult study of the more enduring effects of socialization, educational innovation, psychotherapy, and cultural change on values (Rokeach, 1968, pp. 158-159). Therefore, he stressed the importance of value study because of the following three reasons: value seems to be a more dynamic concept since it has a strong motivational component as well as cognitive, affective, and behavioral components; while attitude and value are both widely assumed to be determinants of social behavior, value is a determinant of attitude as well as of behavior; and, if we further

assume that a person possesses considerably fewer values than attitudes, then the value concept provides us with a more economical analytic tool for describing and explaining similarities and differences between persons and groups (Rokeach, 1973, pp. 18-19).

Value Systems

Values have to do with modes of conduct (instrumental values) and end-states of existence (terminal values). The distinction between terminal values and instrumental values is an important one. For one thing, the total number of terminal values is not necessarily the same as the total number of instrumental values. Terminal values are personal and social, intrapersonal or interpersonal in focus. Such end-states as salvation and peace of mind, for instance, are intrapersonal while world peace and brotherhood are interpersonal. Instrumental values are moral and competence values. Moral values refer to modes of behavior and have an interpersonal focus, which, when violated, arouse pangs of conscience or guilt. Competence values are personal rather than interpersonal and when violated arouse pangs of shame rather than guilt.

Once a value is internalized it becomes a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and

situations, for justifying one's own and others' actions and attitudes, for morally judging self and others, and for comparing self with others (Rokeach, 1973, pp. 23-25).

Both sets of values, instrumental and terminal, are hierarchically arranged and organized to form a single interconnected belief system. According to Rokeach, beliefs are inferences made by an observer about underlying states of expectancy. Belief systems are defined as having each of a person's beliefs about physical and social reality organized in a psychological, though not necessarily logical, form within them (Rokeach, 1968, p.2). Within this system terminal values are more central than instrumental values and instrumental values are more central than attitudes. The more central a belief the more it is functionally connected or in communication with other beliefs, and therefore the more implications and consequences it has for other beliefs.

Value Survey

Rokeach developed an instrument to measure change in values called "The Value Survey." A major reason for its formation was the long-standing assumption that the centrally located values were more resistant to change than attitudes. Although attitudes are indeed vulnerable to persuasive change, they are typically short-lived since the more central values underlying them have been

left intact. The inconsistency between intact values and changed attitude produces tension, and to reduce the tension the changed attitude reverts to its earlier, original position of consistency with the intact values.

This theory implies then that under certain conditions, values may be easier to change than attitudes. Rokeach determined that values are less central than self-conceptions but more central than attitudes. If a person's values are in fact standards which maintain and enhance self-conceptions, then a contradiction between values and self-conceptions should be resolved by changing the less central values. A value that contradicts self-conceptions is more likely to undergo change than an attitude that is discrepant with persuasive communications. A value should undergo enduring change if maintenance or enhancement of self-conception is at stake, and its having undergone change should lead to systematic changes in other related conditions within the belief system and should then culminate in behavioral change (Rokeach, 1973, pp.214-216).

Rokeach designed an experiment to explore the effects of such inconsistencies within our belief systems. First, he suggested that there was an advantage to having subjects rank order a set of positive values in order of importance. For one thing, there would be little reason for the subjects to disguise their honest reaction

to the ranking since they would be unaware of the psychological significance of their response. Also, they would have nothing more than their own value system to guide them. It would only be after calling attention to the fact that the subject may have ranked their values in a discrepant or even hypocritical manner that they would become embarrassed, and embarrassment is an overt, behavioral manifestation of cognitive imbalance.

With this in mind he focused on a set of 12 terminal values, and singled out the target values of equality and freedom. Three groups were used in the study, one being the control. All three filled out a questionnaire concerning equal rights for negroes, equal rights for other groups, and American policy in Vietnam. One week later all three groups rank ordered the 12 terminal values:

A comfortable life

A meaningful life

A world at peace

Equality

Freedom

Maturity

National security

Respect for others

Respect from others

Salvation

True Friendship

Wisdom

Group "B" was shown the composite rank orders actually obtained by 444 other Michigan State students for the same 12 values. To arouse feelings of inconsistency between two terminal values the researcher remarked "One of the most interesting findings shown here is that students, on the average, ranked freedom first and equality sixth. This suggests that Michigan State students are more interested in their own freedom than the freedom of others." Group "C" received this plus an additional dissonance arousing commentary about civil rights.

Posttests on the groups' values and attitudes were conducted three weeks later and three months later. The results showed significantly positive increases in equality and freedom rankings for the experimental groups both three weeks and three months later.

These results are supportive of the now widely accepted proposition that a necessary condition for a change in values, beliefs, and/or attitudes is a state of cognitive inconsistency (Rokeach, 1968, pp.172-176).

Television and Children

Throughout the history of the human race, children's value systems have been developed and nurtured by parents and relatives who pass on their view of the world and standards of behavior. As children grow older this

initial environment is expanded to include friends, neighbors, movies, school, and other social influences.

Although this basic process remains intact, a dominant dimension has overwhelmed these influences. The television medium as a social force and its impact on children has quite naturally been the topic of heated research the past 30 years. During the past decade especially, there has been a good deal of research on developmental changes in the way children perceive and interpret television.

The child who watches four hours daily between the age of 3 and 18 spends more than 22,000 hours in passive contemplation of the screen (Hayakawa, 1979, pp. 111-112). These amounts of time spent in front of television sets make it important to consider the influence of television on a child's development. It is presumed that the child's perceptions of the television characters and situations they witness will have a strong influence in the way of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects.

Since no commercial station devotes massive amounts of time to children's programming, it is also presumed that "adult" TV programs are watched. Friedson (1953) has shown that TV is the mass medium which children from kindergarten through 6th grade are most apt to use in a family situation; a "family activity," according to Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958).

Family attendance is one of the primary motives for exposure. Seagoe (1951), Symthe (1955), and Klapper (1954) have suggested the common situation of family viewing is in itself enjoyed by children who may see themselves as participating in a grown-up activity. Maccoby (1954) related the amount of TV viewing children do to their social status and degree of frustration with their families. Shayon (1951) says teenagers are a minority in that they are no longer treated as children, but are too young to be adults, so they seek TV as a contact with the adult world.

The quantity of the adult world on TV may unnaturally accelerate the impact of the real world on children.

There is also the possibility of trouble in reference to the effect of portrayed value conflicts. Specifically, the contrast between the behavior of known and familiar adults - particularly parents - and the behavior of adults portrayed on TV seems likely to bewilder children in reference to questions of socially accepted attitudes and values (Klapper, 1960, p. 207).

A number of theoretical perspectives on cognitive development posit that young children are more responsive to surface features stimuli than they are to more conceptual types of information that are presented at the same time. Empirical support for young children's perceptual dependence comes from several areas. Research

has shown a decrease around age 7 in the tendency to sort or match items according to perceptual attributes, and a corresponding increase in the use of functional and conceptual groupings (Birch & Bortner, 1966; Melkman & Deutsch, 1977; Melkman, Tversky, & Baratz, 1981; Olver & Hornsby, 1966; Sigel, 1953). In addition, in studies of memory perceptual clustering of items in recall has been found to decrease with age, whereas conceptual clustering has been found to increase (Hasher & Clifton, 1974; Melkman & Deutsch, 1977; Melkman, 1981).

A 1985 study by Hoffner and Cantor attempted to determine whether children's sensitivity to perceptual aspects of stimuli had implications for their impression of TV characters. Subjects aged 3-5, 6-7, and 9-10 viewed a video tape in which a protagonist's appearance (attractive, ugly) was factorially varied with behavior (kind, cruel). It was hypothesized, based on empirical evidence of developmental decrease in perceptual dependence, that the influence of the character's appearance would decrease with age, while influence of her behavior would increase with age. The hypotheses were supported.

The manner in which children process TV has been further studied with regard to modality. In a series of experiments (Collins, 1970, 1973; Collins, Wellman, Keniston, & Westby, 1978) it was demonstrated that preschool and primary grade children are poor at

understanding interscene associations, such as the occurrence of an action and its subsequent consequences. The authors attributed this poor understanding to subjects' failure to attend to the temporal order of televised information, describing the integration processes of young children as highly "fragmented." Presumably, the failure to associate an event with those that precede and follow it could adversely affect the overall comprehension of a TV show (Hayes & Kelly, 1984, p. 505-506).

Television literature has also reported that higher retention of visual than auditory information occurs when children are trying to learn a show's content, as well as when they are viewing for entertainment alone (Hayes, 1981).

Hayes and Kelly conducted two experiments to examine modality differences in preschooler's ability to recognize or recall temporally related events. Results of both experiments demonstrated that temporally related events were remembered more frequently when they were conveyed visually than aurally. The data suggest that a deficiency in processing temporal information contributes to children's poor comprehension of TV (Hayes & Kelly, 1984, pp. 205-206).

Most conceptions about children and television viewing is that it is passive in nature. This is due to characterizations of the young child as being stimulus

bound (Anderson, Lorch, Smith, Bradford, & Levin, 1981, p. 446).

Recent studies (Alwitt, Anderson, Lorch, & Levin, 1980; Anderson, Lorch, Field, & Sanders, 1981; Lorch, Anderson, & Levin, 1979) propose an alternative conception of young children's television viewing as an active transaction among the viewer, the TV, and the TV-viewing environment. This view suggests that children's attention to TV is primarily determined by their understanding of the content of the TV program. There are strong correlational and experimental findings supporting the view which indicates preschoolers' visual attention to TV is strongly determined by program comprehensibility (Anderson, 1980; Anderson, Alwitt, Lorch, & Levin, 1979; Anderson and Levin, 1976; Levin & Anderson, 1976).

Social learning theory is recognized in television viewing research as being the basis for a relationship between children's attitudes and TV viewing for two reasons. First, children can and do learn appropriate behavior through observation of models (including models on TV) with direct reinforcement. Second, children attempt to maximize personal rewards, usually in the form of reinforcement for imitating or identifying with a model (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin & Neuendorf, 1982, p. 191).

Role emulating or recognizing of TV characters has been supported by empirical research, especially in the realm of social roles. DeFleur and DeFleur found that both knowledge about specific occupational roles and ability to rank those roles in terms of prestige increased with exposure to portrayals of those occupations on TV. Children rated occupations that were outside their direct experience, but were prominent on TV with considerably greater consistency than those known from direct experience or not appearing on television with notable frequency (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 1982, pp. 191-192).

Family roles are especially salient to children. Research on children's conceptions of families and kinship roles has generally attempted to show how these conceptions become more abstract and structurally complex (Watson, & Amgott-Kwan, 1984, p. 953). Children's thinking about kinship roles and family relationships, between 6 and 13 years old, develops from concrete, absolute terms to abstract, relational terms. According to Fisher's theory of hierarchial development of cognitive skills, a child develops various skills, whether cognitive, social, or physical, that are intercoordinated with each other to form a new higher order unit that, although demonstrating a new level of skill or understanding, is comprised of the previous subskills.

A study by Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin, and Neuendorf investigated the relationship between children's exposure to televised portrayals of communication behavior among family members and their expectations about the real-life occurrence of such behavior in family settings. Four categories of variables were measured: television content, children's perceptions and attitudes, parental behavior and perceptions, and children's beliefs about real-world families. In the latter category, two variables were investigated: first, how realistic children perceived the behavior of television families to be, and, what children thought they learned from television about family life. The researchers expected that the more children believed that TV families were similar to real families and that they could learn from TV, the more they would learn about family roles from TV (Buerkel-Rothfuss, Greenberg, Atkin, and Neuendorf, 1982, p. 192).

Results indicated that children who frequently watch family TV shows appear to believe that families in real-life show support and concern for one another. Also, children's exposure to family programs which portray affiliative (offering and seeking information, supporting and showing concern for others, directing others and accepting support and direction) communication among family members leads them to perceive that real-life families are more affiliative.

During the 70's when television research was at its height, the primary topic of concern was television's antisocial effects, especially in the area of violence and aggression. Comstock (1978) reports that antisocial research outnumbers prosocial research in this area by a factor of four to one. Relatively few studies are concerned with the benefits of TV. Baran, Chase, and Courtright (1979) found that cooperation could be increased in young children after exposure to an episode of "The Waltons" that dealt with cooperation in problem solving. Among the prosocial behaviors that have improved following television exposure are friendliness, cooperation, creativity, empathy, and racial tolerance (Roberts and Bachan, 1981).

Much of the past research, pro or anti-social, has focused on TV with regard to processing, retention, visual versus aural stimulation, and so forth. However, there do not seem to be any studies which have looked specifically at value systems and television viewing. The purpose of this study was to take Rokeach's basic value change theory, that of self-confrontation, and evaluate it in comparison to the effect of a television program on a adolescent's value system; specifically the values of responsible and independence.

Presently, the most successful family TV show is NBC's "The Cosby Show." Number one in the television rankings since September 1985, the show's popularity may

be attributed to many things. Besides its obvious entertainment quality, Cosby himself states, "All I do has to do with some form of education, some form of giving a message to people" (Orlando Sentinel, 1986, p. A-2). It is for these reasons "The Cosby Show" was selected as one of the treatments for this study.

According to several noted child researchers (Frazier and Lisonbee, 1950; Lerner & Korn, 1972), the time for developing self-concepts is especially crucial during adolescence. Adolescence is generally believed to start at age 12 and end at the beginning of adulthood, or age 20 (Frazier and Lisonbee, 1950). It is a time of active physical, cognitive, and moral development. By the age of 12, children have encountered and learned many or all of their values. Due to the effects of peer pressure, self-awareness, family environment, and many other factors, their value systems will be vulnerable to change.

Due to this time-frame of adolescence described here, the subjects for this study were selected from the beginning (11-13) and the end (18-20) of adolescence. The author felt the comparison of the two age groups would lend itself well to value change theory since the younger category is presumably still vulnerable, and the older group less so.

Therefore, in light of the past value research by Rokeach as it relates to change due to inconsistencies

within the belief system, and the effects of the television medium on young people's understanding and perceptions, this study was designed to investigate the following research questions as they pertain to our instrumental values, specifically the target values of responsible and independence.

1. Will influence of either treatment (Rokeach/Cosby) be great enough to significantly change value rankings of responsible and/or independence?
2. What influences values more, Rokeach's self-confrontation treatment or "The Cosby Show"?
3. Will the first rankings of responsible and independence differ significantly between the two age groups, (11-13 and 18-20).
4. Will value change in rankings for responsibility and independence (if any) be greater for young adolescents versus old adolescents?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects for this study were selected from three undergraduate communication classes at the University of Central Florida, and three above-average (IQ 130+) seventh grade classes at Glenridge Junior High School. A total of 102 students participated (39 in young age group, 63 in old age group). The cell sizes ranged from 12 to 26 subjects.

Design

The study was a 2 X 3 (age X treatment) design. The age variables consisted of young adolescents (11-13 years) and old adolescents (18-20) years.

The treatment variables consisted of the following levels:

1. Self-confrontation - A number of studies suggest human values may be changed as a result of self-confrontation. This is a treatment in which individuals are given certain feedback and interpretations concerning their own and significant others' values. Rokeach proposed that this feedback makes some people aware of chronically existing contradictions between their values and their self-conceptions. He further proposed that the

awareness of such inconsistencies arouses a state of self-dissatisfaction and, as a means of reducing this negative affective state, some individuals will change their values to become more consistent with self-conceptions (Rokeach, 1979, pp. 241-242). Only the 18 instrumental values (those that guide our everyday conduct) were used, with the focus on the target values of responsible and independence.

2. The Cosby Show - A weekly, one-half hour television program originally shown on NBC at 8:00 p.m., on Thursday evening in April of 1986. This particular program portrayed Theo and his friend Cockroach's strict math teacher (Ms. Westlake) giving birth to her first child, therefore leaving the students with a substitute teacher for their big math test; Theo and Cockroach's study habits; Rudy, the youngest daughter, learning to ride a bicycle better on her own than with her father's help; and the second youngest daughter learning to deal with becoming a teenager. This program was chosen for the study since it portrayed the value of responsibility on several different levels.

3. Control - Subjects in this group received no treatment; but ranked and re-ranked their values.

This design was used to measure the effects of "The Cosby Show" versus Rokeach's self-confrontation theory on students' value rankings of responsible and independence, and attitudes/beliefs about the value's ranked.

Procedure

The tests for this study were conducted in the fall of 1986 at the University of Central Florida and Glen Ridge Junior High School during regular class time.

Two researchers were hired by the author to conduct the experiments; one male graduate student in the communication department at the University of Central Florida, and one female graduate of the same graduate department. The female researcher was in charge of the college students, and the male was in charge of the junior high students. This is recognized as "nesting," a methodological artifact which could affect the results.

A total of six classes were asked to participate and told that the study was being done by the graduate department of communication at the University of Central Florida. The tests took up to 50 minutes to administer and complete for each group; therefore, only one class period was needed to conduct the research. In each group, all instructions for completing the measuring instruments were read aloud by the researcher and students were asked to remain silent during the experiment, except for any questions they had for the researcher.

In the self-confrontation group (from here on referred to as the Rokeach group) students were given a list of Rokeach's 18 instrumental values and asked to rank them in order of importance, from 1 to 18, with 1 being the most important. A definition of the term value

was not given. The subject's name, age, and sex were asked for on this first page only.

The researcher then distributed to subjects a page containing the alleged rankings of 100 other students their age (rankings were actually from Rokeach's 1971 study of Michigan State University students). The students were given a brief interpretation of their peer's value rankings by the researcher who pointed out the disparity between the ranking of responsible (2) and independence (12). He/she suggested to the students that if one feels they are responsible then they should also be independent. How can one be important without the other? Subjects were given a few moments to compare their rankings with their peers. They then turned in all the forms used to that point.

Next, the subjects were given an attitude measure. It consisted of eight questions about values, which were answered by rating 5-point Likert-type scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For purposes of analysis, the ratings were given values of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The questions asked how strongly subjects' felt about their values, where they thought they learned their values, and if they thought their values could change.

After turning in the attitude measure, students were given another value ranking sheet and asked to rank their

values one more time. They were then thanked for their time and dismissed.

In "The Cosby Show" group subjects were given the first value ranking page, identical to the Rokeach group, and asked to rank their values from 1 to 18, with 1 being the most important.

When they had completed this, subjects were shown "The Cosby Show" episode, which had been recorded in April 1986. The researcher fast-forwarded the show during commercials, reducing the normal one-half hour length to 22 minutes. Before viewing the program the subjects were asked to turn in their value rankings.

After the program, subjects were given a page asking them to rank the three most important values they saw portrayed during the program. These were collected and the attitude questionnaire (identical to the Rokeach group) was handed out. When students completed this, they passed in the pages and were given a list of ancillary questions about "The Cosby Show." Subjects were asked 13 different questions about "The Cosby Show," such as whether or not they had seen it before, whether they thought it was educational, how often they watched TV. The questions were a combination of 5-point Likert-type scales, dichotomous answers, and fill-in. After completion, subjects passed in the pages and were given the list of values to rank one more time. They were then thanked for their time and dismissed.

The control group for each age category was given the same first ranking sheet of values and asked to rank their values from 1 to 18, with 1 being the most important. When they completed this, they were asked to submit the sheets and complete the attitude measure. These were collected in after completion, and the subjects were given the value ranking page again to rank their values one more time. Finally, they were thanked for their time and allowed resume their normal class instruction.

Data collected from this research were analyzed by first determining the means and change scores for the rankings of responsible and independent from pretest to posttest. A constant of 20 was added to each change score so that a positive value could be used in the analysis. Two-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the attitude/belief data. One-way ANOVAs were performed on the ancillary measures administered to the Cosby show groups.

RESULTS

Values

The results for the research questions put forth are as follows:

1. Will the influence of either treatment (Rokeach/Cosby) be great enough to significantly change the value rankings of responsible and/or independence?

Data for the first research question yielded no significant differences between comparison groups for the value of independence (see Table 1). However, the treatment X age group interaction approached significance on rankings of responsible ($F = 2.67$, $p < .08$, $df = 2, 94$). This interaction is primarily due to the large increase in the mean ranking of responsible by the young adolescent/Cosby group, (\bar{X} change = 3.42) combined with much smaller increases and even decreases in this ranking by the remaining groups (see Table 2).

2. What influences values more, Rokeach's self-confrontation treatment or "The Cosby Show"?

Again there were no significant effects of either treatment on the value independence. While there is no significant effect to report on responsibility, there is a trend which indicates "The Cosby Show" had a greater effect on the young adolescents (\bar{X} change = 3.42) than on

the old adolescents (\bar{x} change = $-.78$) and that the Rokeach treatment had some effect, (young \bar{x} change = 1.57 ; old \bar{x} change = 1.16) though not significantly different between age groups.

3. Will first rankings of responsibility and independence between the two age groups differ significantly?

A manipulation check between the means of the two values, independence and responsible yielded no significant difference in initial rankings between age groups.

4. Will value change in rankings for responsible and independent be greater for the young age group versus the old age group?

No significant results were obtained, though a trend indicated the younger adolescents were affected more by "The Cosby Show" than the older adolescents.

Attitude/Belief Measurement

A series of questionnaire items were used to measure attitudes about how the subjects' felt about their values. Statistically reliable differences in responses to the questions were obtained.

On the first item, "The values I ranked earlier are not important to me," a two-way analysis of variance revealed a main effect on the age variable ($F = 5.70$, $p < .01$, $df = 2, 95$). Since a higher number indicated greater importance of the values (\bar{x} = Young/Cosby 4.33 ;

Young/Rokeach 4.43; Young/Control 3.85; Old/Cosby 4.58; Old/Rokeach 4.62; Old/Control 4.55), older adolescents felt the values were more important more so than the younger adolescents.

The fifth attitude question - "I think you develop certain values when you are young and they never change," yielded an interaction at the .06 level ($F = 2.95$, $p < .06$). This may have been affected by the young/Cosby group, which throughout the results shows a trend for change, especially on the value of responsibility (\bar{x} = Young/Cosby 3.5; Young/Rokeach 3.0; Young/Control 2.23; Old/Cosby 2.95; Old/Rokeach 3.08; Old/Control 3.12).

A two-way ANOVA on the sixth attitude question - "You can't learn values from TV" yielded two significant main effects. One was on the age variable ($F = 6.33$, $p < .01$, $df = 2, 95$), and one was on the treatment variable ($F = 7.54$, $p < .01$, $df = 2, 95$). These results indicated that "The Cosby Show" groups disagreed the most with the statement, and that the older adolescents disagree more than the younger adolescents (see Table 3).

No significant differences were obtained among comparison groups on the remaining belief items.

Ancillary Measure

Results from the ancillary questions asked of the Cosby group indicated that 95% of the college group had seen the program before, as had 100% of the junior high group. A combination of both the young and old groups

(102 students) reported they had seen the show: a few times, 23%; many times, 45%; every week, 29%; once, 0%.

The means for the following questions yielded no significant results:

<u>Young</u>	<u>Old</u>
3. "I like The Cosby Show."	
1.25	1.21
4. I think the show is true to life.	
1.92	2.31
5. The show reminds me of my family.	
3.08	2.89
7. I would like my family to be more like the Huckstables.	
2.42	3.05
11. I think "The Cosby Show" is entertaining.	
1.25	1.31
12. I think "The Cosby Show" is educational.	
2.08	1.89

The character most identified with by both groups on the show was Theo (16%), followed by Denise (6%), all characters (6%), Vanessa (3%), Cosby (3%), and Clare (3%).

Both groups reported that they learned their values from friends and watching TV (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being family, 2 being friends, 3 being TV, 4 books, and 5 other, the average score was 2.59 for the young group and 2.2 for the old). Thirty three percent of the young

adolescents indicated they watch TV with friends, 58% with family, and 8% watch television alone. Among the older adolescents, 32% indicated they watch TV with friends, 47% with family, and 21% alone.

A total of 83% of the young adolescents indicated they learned something from "The Cosby Show," 17% did not. In the older group, 68% said they learned something from the show, and 11% said they did not.

Both groups reported the value "love" ranked first in the three values seen, with the young/Cosby group showing a tie with responsible for the number one ranking.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate "The Cosby Show" had a measurable effect on the young adolescents value ranking of responsible (\bar{x} change = 3.42).

Neither the Rokeach nor the Cosby show treatment had any significant effect on rankings of the value independence. This may be because the definition given for independence was "able to take care of yourself," which for the students' was obviously true and stable. The definition for responsible however, "dependable, reliable," connotes judgment from others; it could arouse feelings of guilt. Since both treatments are attempting to make the subject look closer at themselves and their values, the value responsible may be in a more vulnerable position for change than independence.

Past research on children's sensitivity to television viewing (Hoffner and Cantor, 1985) supports the finding that younger adolescents showed a trend of being more influenced by "The Cosby Show" than older adolescents. Though there has been no specific research dealing with Rokeach versus this type of television programming, past studies on children's responses to TV viewing are in line with the findings of this study.

For instance, past television research reports that children have a higher retention of visual rather than auditory information while watching TV. This may help explain why "The Cosby Show" had a greater effect on the younger adolescents over the Rokeach treatment. The combination of the visual stimulation with the aural content may have enhanced their conception of responsible. Another example is the study by Baran, Chase, and Courtright (1979), which showed that cooperation could be increased in young children after exposure to an episode of "The Waltons" which dealt with cooperation in problem solving. And, Roberts and Bachan (1981) reported that other behaviors have improved following television exposure, such as friendliness, cooperation, creativity, empathy, and racial tolerance.

An interesting result of this study was that there were no significant differences in first rankings of responsible and independence between the age groups. This may be an indication that by the time a child reaches the age of 13, his value system is already established and should generally remain intact, though it does appear to be more impressionable at a younger age.

Following in this same trend, the results of the attitude/belief scales on the perceived importance of values showed that the older adolescents felt their values were more important than the younger adolescents. This is another indication that while value systems are

in place by the age 13, the younger group is not only more impressionable, but their values are not quite as salient either.

The interaction obtained on the attitude item about "developing certain values when you are young and they never change" may be another example that the younger adolescents are open to change and still learning. The older adolescents agreed with the statement, showing that they feel their values are firmly intact and are therefore more difficult to change.

The most significant result among the attitude/belief questions came from the question, "You can't learn values from watching TV." Interestingly, the older adolescents disagreed with the question significantly more than the younger. Perhaps they took the term "you" to mean others, rather than taking it personally, meaning they realize the effects television is capable of producing, though they do not feel it can affect them and their value systems. As expected, "The Cosby Show" groups disagreed significantly more ($F = 7.54, p < .01, df = 2, 95$) than the Rokeach and control groups on this item. This result was especially affected by the young/Cosby group since they had already changed their value rankings on the value responsible.

There were no significant differences between age groups on any ancillary measures for "The Cosby Show." However, there were a number of interesting figures.

The fact that 58% of the younger adolescents watch television with their family is in agreement with reports that family attendance is one of the primary motives for viewing. Seagoe (1951), Symthe (1955), and Klapper (1954) suggested that the situation of family viewing is enjoyed by children, who see themselves as participating in a grown-up activity.

Another important figure is that 83% of the younger adolescents and 68% of the older adolescents reported learning something from the program. This suggests that while the older adolescents felt the show could not change their values, it did teach them something. The remarks most often stated for what was learned were "dealing with others, dealing with family." Several subjects mentioned they were happy to see that others share the same ups and downs and situations of life that they do.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

* The treatment X age group interaction on values ranked approached significance on the values responsible, ($F = 2.67$, $p < .08$, $df = 2, 94$). This interaction is primarily due to the large increase in the mean ranking of responsible by the young adolescent/Cosby group, (\bar{x} change = 3.42) combined with much smaller increases and even decreases in this ranking by the remaining groups.

* There is a trend which indicates "The Cosby Show" had a greater effect on the young (\bar{x} change = 3.42) adolescents than on the old (\bar{x} change = $-.78$) adolescents.

* There were no significant differences between age groups on their first rankings of responsible and independence.

* There was a main effect on the age variable for the attitude/belief question "The values I ranked earlier are not important to me," ($F = 5.70$, $p < .01$, $df = 2, 95$). Since a higher number indicated greater importance of the values, older adolescents felt the values were more important than the younger adolescents.

* An interaction approached significance on the question, "I think you develop certain values when you are young and they never change," ($F = 2.95$, $p < .06$, $df =$

2,95). This may have been affected by the young/Cosby group, which, compared to the older adolescents, show a trend for change throughout the results.

* Two significant main effects were obtained on the attitude question "You can't learn values from TV," the age variable ($F = 6.33$, $p < .01$, $df = 2,95$) and the treatment variable ($F = 7.54$, $p < .01$, $df = 2,95$). These results indicated that "The Cosby Show" groups disagreed the most with the statement, and that the older adolescents disagree more than the younger adolescents.

CONCLUSION

It appears that a single 30-minute TV show can cause a change in a young person's value systems. Exactly why this particular program had such an effect could be a result of many factors; the entertainment enjoyed by the program, the familiarity of the show and the situations, and/or the combination of visual and aural stimuli. These are all elements that seem to affect the 11-13 year olds much more dramatically than the 18-20 year olds.

The fact that the older adolescents disagreed the most with the question "You can't learn values from TV" suggests that they could have been more cognizant of their values than the younger adolescents during the Cosby show. Therefore, the older group did not want to feel hypocritical by changing their value rankings after watching the program, admitting the Cosby show had an effect on their judgment.

This particular study is one example of prosocial research that could be conducted on "The Cosby Show" and its effect on value systems. The same procedure could be performed on other Cosby shows, on different target values, or with young and old adults. The long-term effects of this type of study could be researched as well. Comparisons of the Cosby show's effects with other television programs would provide an additional

extension. The effects of the present study on children of minority groups, or abused children, or children with learning disabilities are other possibilities.

This study shows the importance, still, of pro-social research in the area of television programming. The topic of television research and children, especially that of anti-social effects, was at its height in the 70's, and has since lost its fervor. The vulnerability of children to television's influence, however, is something that is constant in every decade, every generation. And, with the impact and strength of the television medium increasing each year, studies of the current type are needed in order to continually monitor the possible positive and negative effects of television on children.

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, our values are more central to self conception than attitudes. Further, attitudes and beliefs are connected to, and in the service of, central values. If this conceptualization were dealt with more often, perhaps a greater "value" could be gleaned from television programming, could be incorporated into teaching methods, and could be instrumental in any effort directed at enhancing and improving the way our young people perceive and conduct themselves in the world around them.

TABLE 1

MEAN VALUE RANKINGS FOR INDEPENDENT

	1st rank	2nd rank	mean difference
Young/Control	7.38	7.77	-.39
Young/Cosby	10.08	10.05	-.42
Young/Rokeach	6.5	6.28	.22
Old/Control	9.18	9.12	.06
Old/Cosby	9.05	9.61	-.56
Old/Rokeach	9.27	8.85	.42

TABLE 2

MEAN VALUE RANKINGS OF RESPONSIBLE

	1st rank	2nd rank	mean difference
Young/Control	5.30	5.54	-.24
Young/Cosby	10.08	6.66	3.42
Young/Rokeach	8.28	6.71	1.57
Old/Control	5.23	6.76	-1.53
Old/Cosby	6.33	7.11	-.78
Old/Rokeach	6.54	5.38	1.16

TABLE 3

MEANS FOR ATTITUDE ITEM # 6

"YOU CAN'T LEARN VALUES FROM TELEVISION"

	Cosby	Rokeach	Control
Young	3.91	3.07	3.08
old	3.95	4.0	3.47

APPENDIX A

NAME _____ DATE _____

AGE _____ MALE ____ FEMALE ____

Please rank the following values, from 1 to 18, in the order of their importance to you, with 1 being the most important. Please mark each value, no "ties."

_____ AMBITIOUS	(HARD WORKING, EAGER)
_____ BROADMINDED	(OPEN-MINDED)
_____ CAPABLE	(GOOD AT, EXPERT)
_____ CHEERFULL	(HAPPY, JOYFUL)
_____ CLEAN	(NEAT, TIDY)
_____ COURAGEOUS	(STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS)
_____ FORGIVING	(TO EXCUSE)
_____ HELPFUL	(WORKING FOR GOOD OF OTHERS)
_____ HONEST	(SINCERE, TELLING TRUTH)
_____ IMAGINATIVE	(DARING, CREATIVE)
_____ INDEPENDENT	(ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF SELF)
_____ INTELLECTUAL	(SMART)
_____ LOGICAL	(ABLE TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS)
_____ LOVING	(AFFECTIONATE, TENDER)
_____ OBEDIENT	(RESPECT, DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD)
_____ POLITE	(COURTEOUS, WELL-MANNERED)
_____ RESPONSIBLE	(DEPENDABLE, RELIABLE)
_____ SELF-CONTROLLED	(SELF-DISCIPLINE, CONTROL)

NAME _____

Please rank the following values, from 1 to 18, in the order you think your classmates would rank them, with 1 being the most important. Please mark each value, no "ties."

_____	AMBITIOUS	(HARD-WORKING, EAGER)
_____	BROADMINDED	(OPEN-MINDED)
_____	CAPABLE	(GOOD AT, EXPERT)
_____	CHEERFUL	(HAPPY, JOYFUL)
_____	CLEAN	(NEAT, TIDY)
_____	COURAGEOUS	(STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS)
_____	FORGIVING	(TO EXCUSE)
_____	HELPFUL	(WORKING FOR GOOD OF OTHERS)
_____	HONEST	(SINCERE, TELLING TRUTH)
_____	IMAGINATIVE	(DARING, CREATIVE)
_____	INDEPENDENT	(ABLE TO CARE OF SELF)
_____	INTELLECTUAL	(SMART)
_____	LOGICAL	(ABLE TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS)
_____	LOVING	(AFFECTIONATE, TENDER)
_____	OBEDIENT	(RESPECT, DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD)
_____	POLITE	(COURTEOUS, WELL-MANNERED)
_____	RESPONSIBLE	(DEPENDABLE, RELIABLE)
_____	SELF-CONTROLLED	(SELF-DISCIPLINE, CONTROL)

NAME _____

The following is how 100 other students your age actually ranked their values. Please take a moment to compare these with you own rankings.

<u>3</u>	AMBITIOUS	(HARD-WORKING, EAGER)
<u>5</u>	BROADMINDED	(OPEN-MINDED)
<u>9</u>	CAPABLE	(GOOD AT, EXPERT)
<u>13</u>	CHEERFUL	(HAPPY, JOYFUL)
<u>10</u>	CLEAN	(NEAT, TIDY)
<u>6</u>	COURAGEOUS	(STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS)
<u>4</u>	FORGIVING	(TO EXCUSE)
<u>7</u>	HELPFUL	(WORKING FOR GOOD OF OTHERS)
<u>1</u>	HONEST	(SINCERE, TELLING TRUTH)
<u>18</u>	IMAGINATIVE	(DARING, CREATIVE)
<u>12</u>	INDEPENDENT	(ABLE TO CARE OF SELF)
<u>15</u>	INTELLECTUAL	(SMART)
<u>17</u>	LOGICAL	(ABLE TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS)
<u>8</u>	LOVING	(AFFECTIONATE, TENDER)
<u>16</u>	OBEDIENT	(RESPECT, DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD)
<u>14</u>	POLITE	(COURTEOUS, WELL-MANNERED)
<u>2</u>	RESPONSIBLE	(DEPENDABLE, RELIABLE)
<u>11</u>	SELF-CONTROLLED	(SELF-DISCIPLINE, CONTROL)

NAME _____

Please study the list below and select the three (3) values you saw being portrayed on "The Cosby Show." Then rank those three values from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important. Choose only three values. They should represent the three most evident values you felt were present.

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ | AMBITIOUS | (HARD-WORKING, EAGER) |
| _____ | BROADMINDED | (OPEN-MINDED) |
| _____ | CAPABLE | (GOOD AT, EXPERT) |
| _____ | CHEERFUL | (HAPPY, JOYFUL) |
| _____ | CLEAN | (NEAT, TIDY) |
| _____ | COURAGEOUS | (STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS) |
| _____ | FORGIVING | (TO EXCUSE) |
| _____ | HELPFUL | (WORKING FOR GOOD OF OTHERS) |
| _____ | HONEST | (SINCERE, TELLING TRUTH) |
| _____ | IMAGINATIVE | (DARING, CREATIVE) |
| _____ | INDEPENDENT | (ABLE TO CARE OF SELF) |
| _____ | INTELLECTUAL | (SMART) |
| _____ | LOGICAL | (ABLE TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS) |
| _____ | LOVING | (AFFECTIONATE, TENDER) |
| _____ | OBEDIENT | (RESPECT, DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD) |
| _____ | POLITE | (COURTEOUS, WELL-MANNERED) |
| _____ | RESPONSIBLE | (DEPENDABLE, RELIABLE) |
| _____ | SELF-CONTROLLED | (SELF-DISCIPLINE, CONTROL) |

NAME _____

Please rank the following values one more time, from 1 to 18, with 1 being the most important.

_____	AMBITIOUS	(HARD-WORKING, EAGER)
_____	BROADMINDED	(OPEN-MINDED)
_____	CAPABLE	(GOOD AT, EXPERT)
_____	CHEERFUL	(HAPPY, JOYFUL)
_____	CLEAN	(NEAT, TIDY)
_____	COURAGEOUS	(STANDING UP FOR YOUR BELIEFS)
_____	FORGIVING	(TO EXCUSE)
_____	HELPFUL	(WORKING FOR GOOD OF OTHERS)
_____	HONEST	(SINCERE, TELLING TRUTH)
_____	IMAGINATIVE	(DARING, CREATIVE)
_____	INDEPENDENT	(ABLE TO CARE OF SELF)
_____	INTELLECTUAL	(SMART)
_____	LOGICAL	(ABLE TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS)
_____	LOVING	(AFFECTIONATE, TENDER)
_____	OBEDIENT	(RESPECT, DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD)
_____	POLITE	(COURTEOUS, WELL-MANNERED)
_____	RESPONSIBLE	(DEPENDABLE, RELIABLE)
_____	SELF-CONTROLLED	(SELF-DISCIPLINE, CONTROL)

NAME _____

Please answer the following questions.

1.) Have you ever seen "The Cosby Show" before? ____ yes
____ no.

2.) If yes, how often?
____ once ____ a few times ____ many times
____ every week.

3.) I like "The Cosby Show."
____ strongly agree
____ agree
____ neutral
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

4.) I think the show is true to life (realistic).
____ strongly agree
____ agree
____ neutral
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

5.) The show reminds me of my family.
____ strongly agree
____ agree
____ neutral
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

6.) Do you identify with any character on the show?
____ yes ____ no.

If yes, which one? _____

7.) I would like my family to be more like the
Huckstables.
____ strongly agree
____ agree
____ neutral
____ disagree
____ strongly disagree

8.) Where did you learn the meaning of the terms you identified in the first part of this questionnaire?
(check as many as necessary).

☐ family ☐ friends ☐ TV ☐ books ☐ other

9.) How often do you watch TV each week?

☐ 0-6 hrs. ☐ 7-12 hrs. ☐ 13-18 hrs. ☐ 19 or more.

10.) Do you usually watch TV ☐ alone, ☐ with friends, ☐ with family? (check only one.)

11.) I think "The Cosby Show " is entertaining.

☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

12.) I think "The Cosby Show" is educational.

☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

13.) Did you, or do you, learn anything from "The Cosby Show?" ☐ yes ☐ no.

NAME _____

Please place a check mark in the space provided according to how you feel about each question.

Example: I love to eat ice cream.

☒ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

1.) The values I ranked earlier are not important to me.
☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

2.) My family taught me everything I know about values.
☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

3.) At my age I still have a lot to learn about values.
☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

4.) Values make you a better person.
☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

5.) I think you develop certain values when you are young, and they never change.
☐ strongly agree
☐ agree
☐ neutral
☐ disagree
☐ strongly disagree

6.) You can't learn values from watching TV.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

7.) Values are necessary because they help you make better decisions.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

8.) I like to take care of myself.

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ agree
- ☐ neutral
- ☐ disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

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